ONTARIO RURAL

RESEARCH AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

1999 ANNUAL REPORT
TO

ONTARIO AGRICULTURAL SERVICES

COORDINATING COMMITTEE

JANUARY 15, 2000

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary 1

2. Introduction 1

3. Mandate 1

4. Sector Scan – Changing Rural Landscape 1

5. Report of Action Taken on Previous Recommendations.. 3

6. Rural Research and Services Priorities - Strategic Directions 3

7. Recommendations Arising from the Gaps/Barriers/Deficiencies 4

8. Summary of Distribution of Recommendations 7

9. Appendices 8

    9.1.1 Committee Membership 8
    9.1.2 Terms of Reference 10

1. Executive Summary

This report is the first annual report of the Ontario Rural Research and Services Committee. As the 4-year strategic directions were developed last year, there has been minimal change in the issues and information needs as expressed by the committee members. Much of the committee discussion, and therefore the recommendations that follow, reflect the need for a coordinated approach to research and the need for timely information to help communities with their decision making at this critical time.

2.I ntroduction

The Ontario Rural Research and Services Committee was created under the umbrella of the OASCC system in response to the increased recognition of the diverse nature of rural Ontario and the interdependency of healthy rural communities, sustainable agriculture and local economic development. The committee met in 1998 and presented its four-year strategic directions report in January 1999. This is the first annual report of the Ontario Rural Research and Services Committee and our second year of operation as a committee.

The committee membership is a cross section of the rural organizations, government and the research community. The Ontario Rural Council (TORC) is a member of the committee. They represent over 35 rural organizations and have a mandate to monitor issues in rural Ontario. They host three issue forums and one conference annually. At each of these venues, research and information needs are profiled. The committee also has representation from three levels of government, the research community as well as representatives from several other rural economic development organizations.

3.M andate

The mandate of the Rural Research and Services Committee is to identify and prioritize future research and service needs that affect the sustainability of the economic, social and environmental conditions of rural Ontario as determined by Ontario rural stakeholders.

4.S ector Scan - The Changing Rural Landscape

Rural Ontario has a diversified economy (no industry or more than one industry represents over 20% of the employment). However the diversity varies across rural Ontario. This past year has seen significant challenges to agriculture-based communities as a result of the pork crisis and drought conditions. The manufacturing and service sectors continue to shift and change to survive in global markets. While the provincial unemployment rate in Ontario has been decreasing over the past year, the unemployment rate in rural Ontario continues to remain higher than the provincial average.

Local service realignment, also known as municipal restructuring, has brought a host of new challenges to rural municipalities as they struggle to determine the most efficient and effective way to deliver services to their residents and businesses. The municipal response has been wide-ranging; everything from amalgamation to service agreements to status quo. Small municipalities are struggling with the huge task before them; to make the best decision in a

fairly limited amount of time. Infrastructure, economic development, child care, ambulance service, welfare programs, transportation, are just a few of the areas where the province has delegated responsibility to local government.

Provincially there are changes in the education and health systems which are threatening the ability of residents to access these services without long drives to the nearest large urban area. Doctors are in short supply in rural Ontario. While most rural residents understand that they can expect a lower level of healthy services, these services are under stress in some communities.

School closures are occurring across the province, however in rural communities this poses a greater concern to families due to the greater distances students will be expected to travel. Rural school boards are concerned with the cost of providing the transportation service. Students will have limited access to extra-curricular activities including after school employment and co-op work opportunities.

There have been a number of new federal and provincial programs and initiatives over the last 2 years providing opportunities for communities to plan local intervention to address their issues and concerns. At the national level, the Rural Dialogue, the appointment of Andy Mitchell as the Secretary of State for Rural Development, and the federal funding program, known as Canadian Rural Partnerships (CRP), demonstrates a strong interest and awareness of the unique challenges facing rural and remote communities. Some of the projects funded under this program may have a research or data gathering component. The ORRSC will monitor these, through its federal representative for any valuable information that could be useful to the committee and also the researchers.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs offered two funding programs directly related to rural economic development; the Rural Job Strategy and the Rural Youth Job Strategy. These programs were available to community organizations as well as rural businesses. OMAFRA has also implemented the Business Retention and Expansion program. It is currently underway in close to 10 rural communities in Ontario. Through this program, participating communities have gathered significant data which will enable them to respond to business needs and issues, work together with local business, and enhance job creation and economic prosperity. OMAFRA's role is to provide provincial program support, training, community facilitation and evaluation.

TORC and the Ontario Association of Community Development Corporations have recently undertaken the Ontario Rural Capacity Assessment (ORCA) project. ORCA is an inventory and an assessment of community-based organizations and supporting resources that improve the economic capacity of rural locales. The process will use a template developed from gathering data related to community-based community economic development at multiple levels.

5. Report of Action Taken on Previous Recommendations

The Ontario Rural Research and Services Committee first met in 1998 to set its strategic research priorities for the next four years. Therefore no recommendations were made at that time.

6. Rural Research and Service Priorities – Strategic Directions

In 1998, the Committee set the following priorities for rural research and services:

A. Economic Development: The need to strengthen economic growth, entrepreneurship and business development in rural Ontario
B. Response to Change and Restructuring: The need to understand, facilitate and assist rural communities as they plan for and act in response to change and restructuring
C. Capacity Building: The need to understand community capacity building and enhance rural leadership, organization and community management
D. Information Technology: The need to understand the roles of and promote the availability and use of information technology in rural Ontario

As this year's meeting was an opportunity to reflect on the past year's priorities, committee members presented the issues and information needs of their respective organization. Discussion followed regarding the nature of the topics presented and whether they fit into the categories and priorities set last year. Essentially it was a chance to review what initiatives were underway and identify the gaps.

The following is an overview of the current research relating to the priority research recommendations set last year:

Research Priority A: Economic Development

Current Ontario Research:

- Developing a Conceptual Framework and Methodology for Studying Rural Communities as Learning Systems – A. Lauzon[1]
- Economic Assessment of Environmental Policy Instruments for Agricultural Production – A. Weersink (RME)
- Regional Wastewater Treatment Technologies –C. Weil (RME)
- Treatment of Municipal Wastewater in Rural Areas – C. Weil (SR9002)
- Phosphorus Removal from Septic Tanks (SR9021)
- Planning for the Future Development of the Niagara "On-Farm" Wine Industry – W. Caldwell (SR9018)
- Risk Assessment & Economic Evaluation of Environmental Damage Associated with Livestock Manure – W. Riddle (RME)[2]
- Quantify Water Quality Impacts Livestock Farms & Other Rural Land Uses – R. Fleming (RME)
- Effect of Land Use Policy on Economic Potential of Rural Tourism – R. Brown (SRC)
- Tourism & Community Development – D. Reid (UG)
- Rural Tourism – Statistics Canada

- Problems, Issues and Experiences of Rural Women in Southern Ontario – N. Mitchell, (Western U)
- Overall Employment of Rural and Farm Women and the Effect of Women's Participation in the Rural Economy – AAFC

Research Priority B: Response to Change and Restructuring
Current Ontario Research:

- Rural Municipal Restructuring – J. Fitzgibbon (SRC)
- Toward More Effective Rural Economic Development in Ontario: D. Douglas (SRC)
- Community Based Responses to Rural Transportation Issues in Rural Ontario (SRC)
- Big School, Small School – A. Lauzon (SRC)
- Health Restructuring in Rural Ontario – A. Lauzon (SRC)
- Managing Change & Uncertainty in Farming & Rural Communities - B. Smit (U G)
- Sustainable Rural Systems in Ontario: (Re)linking Agriculture & Community in an Era of Change – A. Joseph & J. Smithers (UG)
- Agricultural Diversification and Linkages to Rural Economic Development – R. Bollman, Stats Can
- Waterloo Region and Perth County Perceptions of Hog Production –G. Filson (UG)
- Economic Impact of Agricultural Exports in Huron County- H. Cummings
- AAFC - urbanizing of rural areas and how to preserve rural quality of life
- Contribution of Landscape to Rural Quality of Life – Cecelia Pane, UG

Research Priority C: Capacity Building
Current Research in Ontario

- Livelihood – T. Fuller (SRC)
- What is Real Unskilled Workforce in Rural & How do We Train Them – AAFC
- Family Roles on Grand River Dairy Farms- E. Klupfel (UG)
- Rural Youth – who stays, who goes – Stats Can
- Community Based Responses to Rural Transportation Issues in Rural Ontario – T. Fuller

Research Priority D: Information Technology
Current/Recent Ontario Research

- Activating the Rural Bibliography – M. Waldron (SR9024)
- Distance Learning Needs in Rural Communities - AAFC
- PACTS for Rural Ontario – D. Richardson (UG)

7.Re commendations Arising from the Gaps/Barriers/Deficiencies

After a review of the current related research being conducted in the above areas, there are obvious gaps. The committee discussed these at length. The following recommendations reflect the committee's concerns and priorities for this research year.

Recommendation #1

Issue/Priority: Response to Change and Restructuring

OASCC Linkages: n/a

Target Agency: ARIO, University of Guelph

Title: To shift priority B "Response to Change and Restructuring" to be our top priority for this research year.

Details:
It is understood that some research is in progress, however short term data would be useful to communities immediately as in many cases, they are under significant pressure to make decisions regarding service delivery and possible amalgamations. This information does not appear to be available on a provincial level for the purposes of comparison or to share best practices, learnings and outcomes. OMAFRA's special research fund is an option for researchers who are prepared to address this issue.

Background:
Municipal/community response to change and restructuring in response to local service realignment is still a pressing issue. In addition, the province is increasing the pressure on municipalities to make their structural changes prior to the next round of municipal elections. It is critical to understand how municipalities are responding to the new responsibilities they have assumed in the transfer of these responsibilities from provincial to local governments

Recommendation #2

Issue: All 4 strategic priorities

OASCC Linkages: n/a

Target Agency: OMAFRA, AAFC

Title: To ensure that rural research needs and current projects are discussed by the Ontario (Fed) Rural Team.

Details:
By sharing information on the various projects and initiatives undertaken by government departments, there will be increased awareness which can lead to less duplication of resources going towards the same/similar project and the potential of coordination by federal and provincial. With this added mandate, the Ontario (Federal) Rural Team would be able to:

- understand the current levels of support dedicated to relevant rural research within federal and provincial government
- increase the awareness of the variety of rural research support currently provided through federal and provincial governments
- improve communication between and among government levels to reduce duplication of research efforts and to improve the effectiveness of research dollars
- help improve dissemination of research to the community level via government staff;
- and thereby benefiting and strengthening rural research direction and efforts in the long term.

Background:
The need for a proactive strategy to disseminate research; determine various opportunities for distributing relevant user manuals/tools (for use by communities and individual practitioners) strategies to link appropriate resources (this could also be an info tech issue i.e. how to make the info available electronically)
That OMAFRA take the lead in sharing rural research needs and projects as well as service needs to federal and provincial levels of government through federal-provincial teams.

Recommendation #3

Issue: Economic Development (there is a strong relationship between economic development and the environment; and change in the type and intensity of economic development and activity occurring in a community will impact the environment)

OASCC Linkages: Soil Water and Air, Agriculture and Food Engineering, Agricultural Economics

Target Agency: OASCC committees

Title: The Committees of OASCC (named above) coordinate their efforts to include / consider the impact of decisions regarding the quality of rural environment on community economic development strategies.

Details: It is clear that various economic development activities, including farming, have varying affects on the rural environment. It is necessary for municipalities and decision-makers to be aware of the impacts when considering official plans, economic development strategies, and understand the consequences of their decisions.

Background:
- issues relating to the rural environment, impact of agriculture types and density on the environment, air quality, hazardous waste, nutrient management, water quality, water quantity, erosion

8.Summary of Distribution of Recommendations

Recommendation	AAFC	ARIO	CC	CARC	OMAFRA	Other
1.Response to Change and Restructuring		X				
2. Improve federal awareness of Ontario rural research issues					X	TORC
3. OASCC committees review environmental concerns in relation to economic development					X	OASCC Research and Service Cmte

9.APP ENDICES

9.1.1 Committee Membership

ORGANIZATION	NAME	CONTACT INFORMATION
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada	P. Sivaraj	174 Stone Rd. W., Guelph Ont N1G 2S9 519-837-5855, 519-837-9782 fax
Industry Canada	Joyce Holwerda	The Federal Building 451 Talbot St., rm 1112 London Ont N6A 5C9 519-645-4338, 519-645-5073 fax
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs	Helga McDonald	1 Stone Rd W, 3rd Floor Guelph Ont N1G 4Y2 519-826-3711, 519-826-4333 fax
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs	Irene Sullivan	1 Stone Rd W, 3rd Floor Guelph Ont N1G 4Y2 519-826-3189, 519-826-3259 fax
Statistics Canada Agriculture Division	Ray Bollman	Ottawa, Ont K1A 0T6 613-951-3747, 613-951-3868 fax
Alfred College/U of Guelph	Gilbert Héroux	P.O.B. 580, 31 St. Paul St. Alfred Ont K0B 1A0 613-679-2218 ex.301, 613-679-2415 fax
University of Guelph	Ellen Wall	Crop Science, Guelph Ont N1G 2W1 519-824-4120 ext 8480, 519-763-8933 fax
University of Guelph	Phil Keddie	Department of Geography, Guelph Ont N1G 2W1 519-824-4120 ext 3527, 837-2940/6719 fax
University of Guelph	Tony Fuller	School of Rural Planning & Development, Guelph Ont N1G 2W1 519-824-4120 ext. 6783, 519-767-1692 fax
University of Guelph	Alun Joseph	Geography, Guelph Ont N1G 2W1 519-824-4120 ex 6722, 519-837-2940/6719 fax
Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce	Barclay Cornell	Commerce Court East, 2nd Floor 21 Melinda St. Toronto Ont M5L 1A2 416-861-3485, 416-861-3466 fax
Community Abuse Program of Rural Ontario	Donna Lunn	Box 61 Belmont Ont N0L 1B0 1-888-573-6396 or 519-644-0316 ,519-644-0316 fax
Huron County Dept of Planning & Development	Wayne Caldwell	Court House Square, Goderich Ont N7A 3Y4 519-524-2188, 519-524-5677 fax
Ontario Federation of Agriculture	Ron Bonnett	RR 2 Bruce Mines P0R 1C0 705-785-3402, 705-785-1054 fax

ORGANIZATION	NAME	CONTACT INFORMATION
Port Colborne/Wainfleet Development Corporation	Charles Salmon	Box 519 Port Colborne Ont L3K 5X7 905-834-7572, 905-834-4225 fax
The Ontario Rural Council	Jack Hagarty, Chair	4 Colborn St.Guelph N1G 3M3 519-837-1754, 519-837-8229 fax
The Ontario Rural Council	Mary Robertson General Manager	1 Stone Rd W, 4th Floor Guelph Ont N1G 4Y2 519-826-4127 519-826-3408 fax
Huron Business Development Corp.	Paul Nichol	Box 1120 Seaforth, Ont N0K 1W0 519-527-0305
ARIO	Janet Horner	Whitfield Farms RR 2 Shelburne Ont L0N 1S6 519-925-6587
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs	Daphne Peer	1 Stone Rd W, 4th Floor Guelph Ont N1G 4Y2 519-826-4187, 519-826-4211 (fax)

9.1.2. Terms of Reference

RURAL RESEARCH AND SERVICE COMMITTEES' TERMS OF REFERENCE

The whole OASCC system was reviewed in 1997-98. The review suggested that the Rural Development sub-committee of the Agricultural Economics Research and Services Co-ordinating Committee be removed from the Economics umbrella. Thus the Ontario Rural Community Development Research and Services Committee (ORCDRSC) was established in the fall of 1998. It was renamed the "Rural Research and Services Committee" in the fall of 1999.

Mandate:

To identify and prioritize future research and service needs which affect the sustainability of the economic, social and environmental conditions of rural Ontario as determined by Ontario rural stakeholders.

Membership:

- Rural community development practitioners
- Three levels of government (Municipal, Provincial and Federal)
- Researchers

Terms:

- To assess and establish priorities for rural economic development research and service programs
- To communicate and discuss on-going rural research with respect to objectives, procedures and results
- To recommend institutions which, or individuals who, could effectively be responsible for particular research and service needs
- For members to be responsible for gathering research and service needs of the organizations that they represent
- To liaise with the Economics Research and Services Committee for greater effectiveness and efficiency
- To report annually to OASCC summarizing the prioritized needs for rural research and recommendations on resource use and allocations